



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## FACT SHEET

### **MAYOR SANDERS OFFERS HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS TO HELP SAN DIEGANS GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY WEEKEND**

#### *CITY PARAMEDIC BIKE TEAMS TO HELP RESPOND TO MEDICAL EMERGENCIES IN BEACH AREAS*

Mayor Jerry Sanders today offered vital summer health and safety tips for San Diegans in the lead up to the four-day 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. In the first of five daily press conferences to be held this week, the mayor focused on hydration and skin cancer concerns, and highlighted the City's Paramedic Bike Team that will improve emergency response times in the crowded Mission Beach and Pacific Beach areas.

#### **The City of San Diego's Paramedic Bike Team**

During the busy four-day 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, the City of San Diego's Fire-Rescue Department, in conjunction with San Diego Medical Services Enterprise (SDMSE), will maximize the use of its Paramedic Bike Team in the traditionally crowded Pacific Beach and Mission Beach to help with medical response needs there.

Paramedic Bike Teams, which are deployed at various locations throughout the city during special events and during busy holiday weekends, are traditionally staffed with two paramedics and provide first response coverage for areas congested with people.

The Paramedic Bike Team is a way to provide the same level of medical service to the people of San Diego every day using a different means of delivery.

The bikes have all the same medical gear carried on an ambulance, engine or truck company and allow for rapid access to areas that previously would have required crews to lug all required equipment on foot.

The Bike Team was first formed when a need for alternative ways to access potential patients was identified for the 1996 Republican National Convention.

Currently, there are eight front-line bikes, ensuring that four Paramedic Bike Teams can be deployed at any one time. All four teams will be deployed in the Pacific Beach and Mission Beach area on the 4th of July.

The Paramedic Bike Teams are dispatched to medical emergencies just like ambulances and first responders.

### **Additional Ambulance Service**

In addition to the Bike Teams, SDMSE will add two ambulances on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to provide additional coverage at the City's beaches, bays and parks.

SDMSE adjust its ambulance posting plan on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to ensure that 9-1-1 paramedic units are strategically placed to best serve the public.

### **Dealing With the Summer Heat**

With heavy crowds expected, and parking to be at a premium, visitors to the beach are encouraged to arrive early and stay late. However, this brings with it specific health challenges as a result of prolonged exposure to the sun and heat.

Here are some helpful hints for long summer days in the sun:

- **Dehydration**
  - Alcohol is not equivalent to water or Gatorade. Drink at least six to eight glasses of water throughout the day, more if you are exercising
  - Find shade. You lose a lot of “insensible water” in bright sun. It is best to get under an umbrella when lying on the beach or at a park.
  - Babies and elderly are especially vulnerable to heat and sun.
  - Know your medications. Antihistamines, diuretics and some psychiatric medications increase risk of dehydration. Read the labels on your prescriptions before spending long hours in the sun.
  - Pregnant women easily dehydrate and can precipitate premature labor.
- **Heat Stroke and Parked Cars**
  - Never leave a child (or pet) in a car alone, even with the windows down.
  - Always lock unattended cars to avoid children from climbing into them.
  - Call 911 if you suspect a child has been left unattended
- **Sunburns and Sun Protection**
  - Every year patients need care in the Burn Unit due to serious sunburn
  - Don't stay in the sun long (if you're pink, you're done!)
  - Use sun blockers often with protective clothing and shade
  - Don't think blockers provide immunity from burn or melanoma

## **Melanoma**

- In Western countries, melanoma is increasing faster than any other cancer.
- In the U.S., the number of new cases of melanoma has more than doubled in the past 20 years, especially among Caucasians.
- Melanoma's cause is complex, but it is clear that bad sunburns are dangerous. Melanoma patients report bad sunburns two times as often as patients without, and risk rises.
- Children's skin suffers greater damage than adults

## **Sun Safety Tips**

It's important to shield your children's skin from the damaging effects of the sun. No matter what they're doing, or what time of year it is, if they're outside, they need to be protected.

Build safe sun habits into your family's daily routine. Lead by example—children will respond better when they see you protecting your skin. Begin by teaching them the American Cancer Society's easy and fun "safe sun habits": Slip! Slop! Slap!®

The American Cancer Society recommends:

- **Slip! on a shirt.** Wear protective clothing when out in the sun.
- **Slop! on sunscreen** with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- **Slap! on a hat** that shades the face, neck, and ears.
- **Plan** outdoor activities to avoid the midday sun

Helpful hints:

- Wrap on sunglasses for total protection
- Keep an extra bottle of sunscreen in the car
- Pack sunscreen in your child's knapsack or gym bag

## **Fireworks Injuries**

- Parents must serve as good role models
- Each year nearly 10,000 fireworks-related injuries are seen in the nation's emergency rooms, with nearly half of the injured being children
- Most of the injuries involve burns, with hands and eyes being the most common parts of the body injured.
- The safest and best way to enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is to watch a professional fireworks display

### **DON'T:**

- Give any fireworks, including sparklers to small children; older children should be supervised by an adult
- Light fireworks indoors or near other objects
- Wear loose clothing while using any fireworks
- Set off fireworks in glass or metal containers--the fragments can cause severe injury
- Try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks